

For immediate release
September 20, 2005

ACTING COMMISSIONER MARIN TO SPEAK AT SEPTEMBER 28 PUBLIC MEETING IN WESLACO

Acting Commissioner Carlos Marin of the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) will be a featured speaker at the Wednesday, September 28 meeting of the USIBWC's Lower Rio Grande Citizens' Forum (LRGCF). The public meeting will take place at 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at the Weslaco Area Chamber of Commerce, 301 W. Railroad Street in Weslaco, Texas. Marin was named Acting Commissioner following the resignation of Commissioner Arturo Duran on August 31, 2005.

Marin will provide an update on Mexico's Rio Grande water debt. In March, Mexico agreed to deliver water to the United States to eliminate the debt by September 30, 2005. Under the 1944 Water Treaty, Mexico is to deliver an annual average of 350,000 acre-feet to the United States from its Rio Grande tributaries. Mexico began accumulating a deficit in the early 1990s. The deficit, which peaked at more than 1.5 million acre-feet, had been reduced to just over 100,000 acre-feet by September 3, 2005.

In other business, USIBWC Lower Rio Grande Project Manager Rick Reyes and Assistant Project Manager Chris Anzaldua will give a briefing on USIBWC response to Hurricane Emily, which made landfall July 20 in Mexico south of Brownsville, Texas. Resulting rain in northern Mexico caused high flow in the Rio Grande. In response, Commission personnel worked around the clock at Anzalduas and Retamal Dams, agency diversion dams used for flood control.

Wayne Belzer, USIBWC Project Manager for the Texas Clean Rivers Program for the

Rio Grande, will present water quality data from the Lower Rio Grande Basin. The Clean Rivers Program, operated by USIBWC under contract with the State of Texas, collects water quality data throughout the Rio Grande basin in Texas and uses the data to assess water quality issues within the basin. Belzer will discuss problems with bacteria and nutrients in the river and future plans to monitor those concerns.

The Texas Clean Rivers Program will also present awards to participants in the Friends of the Rio Grande program. The Friends of the Rio Grande is a State of Texas initiative to promote environmental education and outreach in the Rio Grande basin.

The purpose of the LRGCF is to facilitate the exchange of information between the USIBWC and members of the public about Commission activities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. A complete meeting agenda appears below. Members of the public who would like more information may contact the USIBWC's Lower Rio Grande Project Office at 956-565-3150 or Public Affairs Officer Sally Spener at sallyspener@ibwc.state.gov.

For more information:

Sally Spener
915-832-4175
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LOWER RIO GRANDE CITIZENS' FORUM

Wednesday, September 28, 2005

4:00 - 6:00 P.M.

Weslaco Area Chamber of Commerce
301 W. Railroad Street*
Weslaco, Texas

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions - Citizens' Forum Co-Chair
- Updates on Mexico's Rio Grande Water Debt and the Morillo Drain Project
- Carlos Marin, Acting Commissioner, USIBWC
- Friends of the Rio Grande Award Ceremony - Wayne Belzer, Clean Rivers
Program Project Manager, USIBWC, and Cory Horan, Clean Rivers
Program Project Manager, TCEQ
- Water Quality Update in the Lower Rio Grande Basin - Wayne Belzer,
Clean Rivers Program Project Manager, USIBWC
- Briefing on USIBWC Response to Hurricane Emily - Rick Reyes, Project
Manager, and Chris Anzaldúa, Assistant Project Manager, USIBWC
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion, Suggested Future Agenda Items

If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time. For more information, call 956-565-3150.

***Directions:** From Expressway 83, turn south on Texas Blvd. in Weslaco. Just before getting to the railroad tracks, turn right (west) on W. Railroad Street. The Chamber of Commerce is on the left side of the street adjacent to the railroad tracks.